

r/HFY · Posted by u/drunken\_turtles 7 hours ago 🐢

## Human Burdens

OC OC

The more I live alongside humans, the more I wish not to. They are an unknown quantity, an anomaly on the galactic stage, and now they have infested every corner of the galaxy. They are born to a deathworld whose religions revolve around death, celebrates the dead, and nearly die when they rest. Their nature is destructive, selfish, arrogant, and even sadistic.

They live in constant conflict with each other and transform the act of war into an art form. Sure, other species have better technologies and weapons, but humans don't need that when they have sheer force. Humans have no need for class, luxury, and finesse. Their technology is modular and utilitarian, and their weapons go beyond effective into the realm of brutality for the sake of it. Weapons of sticky flames that melt soft bodies and slowly cook the unfortunate species with an exoskeleton. Explosive and kinetic weapons made to tear limbs and leave their victims to bleed out - especially *shotguns*. Dirty bombs made to maximize biological damage and a whole plethora of ways to melt you from the inside, too. They win battles through fear.

If a human ever says "Let's introduce these xenos to the GAU-30," hope you're not on the receiving end. Maybe their kinetic shooters lack the range of lasers, but they have the armor and engine power to close the distance and make full use of their MAC and GAU systems.

But nothing in my entire career as a royal soldier fighting against and alongside humans could have prepared me to witness what atrocities they are truly capable of.

I was sent as a first responder to a union orbital station over reports of a *terrorist* attack in the central trading hub. My team had no concept of the human notion of a *terrorist*, so we approached this as some sort of pirate attack. We were to join a human squad to venture into the epicenter of the attack and analyze damage while searching for survivors.

"Moving rubble!" I warned the search party as a robotic hoist carefully moved a fallen steel beam. We held our breaths, the metal screeched and groaned as the rest of the rubble tenuously balanced on the beam. I halted the hoist when a path large enough to crouch through was made.

"I'm going first."

The raspy voice of the human commander came from behind me. His uniform was similar to a medic, but with armor, a firearm strapped to the chest plate, and a large medical bag on his back. "Humans first then terai." The human barked at me while

turning on his helmet light.

His manner of speaking irritated me, but as this was a human-owned station he was in command. We allowed his men to crawl through as we followed close behind. In hindsight, having the larger, stronger humans go first was a relief.

Upon entering the cavernous hub we deployed the floodlights to get a better look at the destruction. The carnage was... horrific. Countless bodies lay on the ground, some torn to pieces, others still holding loved ones. Their flesh had melted off the bone. We were supposed to be war-hardened veterans - the best the throne had - but we all froze in terror. I could feel my stomach churn as a putrid smell hit my nostrils.

"Fucking Markov..." the medic human snarled through gritted teeth.

I meekly mumbled as I struggled to find words, "D-do we search for survivors?"

"Let's... hope no one did." The sturdy voice of the human wavered. "Carry, take the team to the cargo entrance to analyze structural integrity and brace it; I'll stay with the terai party and see if anyone can be saved." All the bite seemed to be sucked out from the commander, his tone now cold.

His men gave a quick nod and went off. The human looked my way and came towards me. We met face to face, I could feel a tingling sensation climb up my back as my eyes met his hollow gaze. It was as if he stared off in the distance and into the depth of my being at the same time.

The human smiled. "Thank you for helping, it truly means a lot. Now, we have a job to do." That moment felt much longer than it should've been, I could feel all my men intently watching. None of us replied, we copied what the other humans did with their heads and spread out to find any survivors.

Surprisingly, it didn't take long for one of my men to find a living human. "I found one still breathing, but it looks bad." My second in command, Shen, gagged.

The medic and I made our way to the destroyed shop stand, careful on the unstable ground. Looking over to the medic, his face seemed dismayed and somber instead of hopeful. Slumped behind the stand was what could barely be described as a male human. Most clothes had burnt off, only one eye remained, and the body was covered in severe burns. A labored gargling with each breath was the only sign of life. I couldn't understand what kind of bomb could do such damage outside and in.

I crouched next to the body and laid my emergency bag down. "By the Royalty... What could even do this?" I questioned under my breath while frantically looking through my emergency bag for anything that could help.

"White phosphorus. A terrible weapon we banned," the human answered while I continued searching through my bag.

A firm hand on my shoulder pulled my attention up at the human standing next to me. Both Shen and I gave him a confused look - he was a medic but he just stood there. "Don't just stand there, we have to save him!" I snapped at the callous human. "Perform your duties as a medic!"

"I'm sorry, son, there's nothing to do..." The human struggled to look me in the face as he pulled his arm away. He looked away and murmured: "I'm sorry" before unholstering his firearm and firing one shot past my head.

I looked back in shock with ringing ears. He had put one bullet through the heart of the survivor. I stammered back to my feet, everyone now looking at us. All my men were appalled, but the humans didn't bother to give more than a glance. Staring back at the medic, he still had the weapon in hand with a smoking muzzle while looking down at the man he just killed.

"You killed him! You heartless, wretched apes!" Outraged, I chastised and cursed the human, my paws clenched as my claws began to dig into my skin. "I should-"

He turned his gaze onto me with a dejected look that managed to shut me up, "I showed him mercy." then holstered his weapon and walked away.

If he was in a royal station I would have him publicly executed for such monstrous acts, but all I could do is stand there in loathsome silence. It was a human station, he was my superior, and any reports wouldn't be investigated in such a dire situation. I just hoped no one lived and made sure the room didn't collapse.

Time felt slow when every step could be your last. When every moment wasted could be a life lost.

It had been nearly four hours after we first entered and it seemed our job was done. The room was safe enough for the station crew to sort through this mess. To my relief, no one else was found alive - as morbid as that sounds. To my dismay, that relief only lasted a few peaceful minutes.

A powerful voice echoed throughout the destroyed hub, coming from the previously known food court sections. "My sensors picked up a heartbeat!" The commanding medic seemed reinvigorated as he lifted debris bigger than my whole body. Before my team could even react, all his men mobilized around the pile of rubble to help.

We approached and watched to avoid getting in their way. They uncovered a human child under the rubble with a crushed arm and missing left leg, but barely breathing. It was awe-inspiring watching the team of four effortlessly coordinate without speaking. In seconds, they sprayed stabilizing foam on the missing leg, inserted an inflatable oxygen tube in the mouth, and wired a vital monitor. On the holographic projection the blood-oxygen levels, blood pressure, and pulse were displayed.

The vitals were volatile; dangerously low. Warning sounds chimed as the numbers turned red.

One of the humans shot us an angry stare while hanging a bag of artificial blood. "Call for help, go do something!"

Two from my team ran for help; I stayed behind as a line of communication. I was not a trained medical unit, but low vitals were universally bad. A feeling of helplessness tore at me - I wasn't brave enough to help and risk a mistake. I've killed enemies, but I couldn't bear having the death of a child on my hands.

"Dammit, she's going into shock, give her intropin!" ordered the leader while rhythmically pushing on the child's chest. The vitals began to stabilize as one human administered an injection. "C'mon, kid, stay strong... No, no, no!" He cried out, frantically taking off his pack as the vitals flatlined. Two paddles attached to the pack by wires were pulled out as it emitted a high-pitched whine. "Clear!" The body twitched and heartbeat once before the horrible ringing of a flatline sounded again.

"Clear!"

"C'mon! Clear!"

"Clear..."

He attempted to kickstart the heart to no avail before throwing the paddles to the side and returning to pumping the chest. The other humans had stopped attempting to stabilize the child as their leader continued, the desperation growing in his pleas. With strained breathing, the human slowed his attempts before giving up. Then, something I would never expect from a man who executed an innocent person happened.

With his head slumped in his hands, he leaned beside the child's body and wept. The silent cries from the human seemingly drowned out the ringing of the vital monitor and the shouts from the oncoming rescue team.

That moment still haunts my memory.

After all the horrible things I said and thought of humans, here I am, now a dedicated member of that medic's crew. Our squads joined forces in search of the ones responsible for that attack.

We were at that station for countless sleepless days and not once did he falter. He was always the first one in and the last one out from any dangerous situation. While we rested he spent the night in the infirmary. While we ate he spared his rations for the injured. Never thought I would say this, but I wholeheartedly trust him and his human companions with my life. He would risk life and limb to save and help the helpless - completely irrationally at times. The price of which was demonstrated in the scars and burns across his body.

I understand the burden he and his men carry, the unbearable weight on their conscience. They constantly fight against their own destructive nature - they spit in the face of reality at their own cost. Sometimes, they have to make hard decisions, some I could never bring myself to do. Humans, in that sense, are stronger than any other species I've had the fortunate inconvenience of meeting.